

## On the Playground by Junigatsu84

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**Summary:**

This is a collection of fluffy one shots from Mike and Will's years growing up together. Starting, of course, with the first day they met.

## On the Playground

Mike had been excited for school. He had spent most of the morning running around getting ready and shoving as many toys as he could into his backpack. Only for his mom to tell him he could only take one toy, his blankie, and a book. Karen Wheeler was exasperated at his energy, but his enthusiasm humored her too. She normally had to fight him to get ready and out the door in the morning. But today he was all smiles and excitement.

Karen and Nancy held Mike's hands. He felt so proud to be going to his sister's school now. She talked about school everyday: her friends, fun things she did in class, and her teacher's wacky outfits.

Once they got in the door, Nancy gave Mike a kiss on the cheek.

"I'm going to Mrs. Humphrey's class. I'll see you after school, Mikey."

Karen kissed her daughter goodbye. "Have a great day, sweetie."

"Bye, Mommy!" Nancy said, then she pranced off in the other direction.

Mike was confused. They weren't going to the same class? He kept walking down the hallway with his mom, holding her hand a little tighter. When they came to the classroom, Mike was immediately overwhelmed. It was loud and there were so many other kids.

He looked around and realized that he didn't know anyone and that he would be here all day.

All he wanted to do was wrap his arms around his mom and cry. He wanted to go back home. But then Nancy would say he was too little to go to school, too much of a baby.

Karen Wheeler knelt down next to her son. The little boy that had been bouncy all morning was now quiet. She could tell he was nervous. "Mikey, I know it's a lot to take in right now, but you are going to have so much fun."

Mikey nodded, still looking around the room.

She swept him up in a big hug. He squeezed her tight. "I love you, sweetie," she said.

"Love you, Mommy." He didn't want to let her go. He steadied himself and walked over to the classroom library. There was a little rug. He took his book: 20 Tough Dinosaurs, out of his backpack and started looking over the pages.

He saw his mom talking to the teacher and took the moment to look around the room. It seemed like many kids already had friends or knew each other. There were kids at the play kitchen, a boy and a few girls were at the tables coloring, and a bunch of boys (and a girl too) over by a basket full of dinosaur toys.

He wanted so badly to go over and play with them. But when he listened, he could hear them arguing about who would get to be the T-Rex. He turned to the page in his book with the Tyrannosaurus Rex on it. The words described cool things about the dino- where fossils had been found, when they lived, and how big they were. He couldn't remember what his dad had said when he read them, though. Mike wished he could read the words. Maybe he would know enough words by the end of the day to read his book, he thought. That cheered him up a bit.

A loud chime played over a speaker above the chalkboard. The kids looked up, confused. The teacher, Mrs. Marley, said in a gentle tone, "Boys and girls, that's the school bell. It rings in the morning to tell everyone that school is starting and to get ready for the day. Let's getting ready by cleaning up our toys and having a seat."

Mike looked around and realized that his mother had gone. Dread filled him as he looked over at the chairs, nervous about who he might have to sit next to. What if they were mean to him? He took his time putting his book back in his back while other kids started sitting down. He scanned the room, trying to look for the safest person to sit next to. He saw a little girl with blonde hair who looked just as shy and quiet as him. He sat next to her.

For the next few minutes, the teacher had them draw a picture of them doing something fun over the summer. Then, she brought everyone over to the carpet, where there were colorful squares

arranged in a circle. She instructed everyone to find a square and sit down.

“We will be going around the circle and introducing ourselves in a little song.” She sang her name in the tune and the little blonde girl, who sat next to Mrs. Marley continued, “My name is Jenny.”

Everyone sang, “Hello, Jenny.”

It was easy to get caught up in the song, as it went around. When it was Mike’s turn, he found his voice, “My name is Michael.”

“Hello, Michael.” He suddenly felt a little better. Everyone had said his name nicely. Maybe making friends would be easier than he thought.

The song continued until it got to another little boy. Even though his head was bent down, Mike could see the tears in his eyes.

Mrs. Marley asked, “Do you want us to come back to you when you’re ready?”

The little boy nodded his head slowly. The song continued.

When it got back to Mrs. Marley, she asked the little boy again, “Are you ready now?”

He blinked and huge tears rolled down his face. Mrs. Marley made a gesture for him to come over to her, he wiped his eyes and walked over.

She took his hand and said in a kind voice, “Whisper your name to me.”

He did as she said. She gave him a smile, “I’m going to sing it for you, okay?”

“This is Will.”

Everybody sang, “Hello, Will.”

“Now that our song is all finished, we are going to sing one more

song: the Alphabet.” She told the class. She asked Will quietly, “Do you want to sit next to me or back at your square?”

He wiped his eyes and pointed at his square.

She nodded and let his hand go.

He seemed to shrink under the eyes watching him.

The class sang the song and Mrs. Marley pointed to the letters as they sang. Then, they “hunted” for plastic letters hidden around the classroom, going over each letter as they found them. Mike was happy to be out from around the circle and he could tell Will had been too. Mike took a glance at him. He had found a letter but didn't seem to want to grab it, lest he have to hold it up for the class to see and have their eyes on him again.

Once the game was over, Mrs. Marley rang a little bell and announced that they would be going outside for recess. The teacher showed them how to walk in a line out the school doors and to the playground. Once they were outside, everyone ran in different directions. Mike looked around and realized he was alone.

Mike first looked around the playground for his sister but she wasn't there. None of the older kids were. His shoulders sank. He walked by some kids who were drawing with chalk, but they were talking together. They knew each other. He wandered around, looking at a group of boys who were kicking a ball around. But he didn't know what game they were playing.

Then, he saw some kids were playing tag so he jumped in, running from the little redheaded girl who was it. He ran away, thinking she was behind him but when he turned, he saw her chasing a bunch of other people. She hadn't even noticed him.

Mike stood there, feeling more lonely than he'd ever felt before.

But then, he saw Will, the boy that had been crying. He was sitting on the swings, dangling his feet back and forth, without moving very much.

Mike walked over cautiously to Will. He wanted to ask why he was

crying, but he couldn't ask that unless they were friends.

Will stopped swinging and looked at Mike, with huge crocodile tears running down his cheeks and nose.

Mike asked, "Do... do you want to be my friend?"

Will blinked, unsure.

Mike stood waiting, feeling nervous.

Will wiped his eyes on his sleeve. He nodded. "Yeah," he said. A small smile tugged at the corner of his cheeks, that were still wet.

Mike asked, "Why are you crying?"

"I miss Mommy and I miss Jonathan. And I can't swing high enough without them." He sniffed up more tears.

"Do you want me to give you a push?"

Will nodded but then stopped, "You won't push me off, right?"

Mike straightened, insulted, "We're friends now. Friends don't do that."

Will seemed satisfied and adjusted himself on the seat while Mike walked around. He gave him a gentle push at first, to get him started. The next pushes were a little stronger, but still gentle.

Mike noticed how Will's feet were moving in different directions as he swung.

"That's not how you swing. Let me show you." he said. Mike got on the seat next to Will. He backed up, making sure the swing's chain was tight and then he launched. "You have to kick your feet like this." He had his feet kicked out as he swung high and under him on the downswing.

"How are you doing that?"

"I have a song I sing. Out," as he kicked his legs forward, "And in."

His legs tucked under him again.

Will tried to copy Mike but he was still slowing down.

Mike stopped himself. "Let's do it together. Copy what I do."

Mike backed up, and so did Will. They kicked their feet off the ground together and Mike coached Will with the song.

"I'm doing it!" Will squealed.

Mike smiled, he liked sharing Will's success. "If you kick harder you'll go higher."

Will tried it and was thrilled. "I can touch the clouds!" He shouted.

Mike giggled, "Me too!"

They continued to swing until the whistle blew. They both looked back, everybody was cleaning up. Mike skidded to a stop.

Suddenly, Will looked panicked, his feet didn't quite reach the ground and he couldn't stop without falling off. "How do I stop?"

"Hold your legs still."

Will did so, he was slowing down a little.

When the swing slowed down some more, Mike grabbed the chain and it swayed, stopping it. Will hopped off.

"Thank you... ummm... Michael?"

"You can call me Mikey. But only because you're my friend."

He smiled, "My name's Will."

The second whistle blew to line up. Without even thinking, Mike held Will's hand and gently lead him to the line. Will beamed. He liked having a friend.

The rest of the day the two were inseparable. They sat together during lunch, storytime, and laid their mats together during naptime.

During free time, they sat together and read Mike's book.

Will offered, "I have a T-Rex in my backpack. Do you want to see him?"

Mike nodded his head and Will ran to get his dinosaur. Will brought it over, happy to have something to share with his new friend.

Mike asked, "Can I hold it?"

Will nodded. "Can I look through your book?"

Mike nodded too and they exchanged items. Mike looked at the dinosaur, feeling the scales, the teeth, and claws. But it was sort of boring just to hold and look at it. He looked over at the basket of dinosaurs, it was empty and the kids that were playing with them had built a jungle out of the blocks and were using all the dinosaurs.

He wished Will had another dinosaur so they could play together. He looked over at Will who was quietly and delicately turning the pages, taking in all the details of each image. Mike had the T-Rex walk on Will's arm down to the book. Will looked at the dinosaur, smiling.

Mike said in his best T-Rex voice, "Apatosaurus are boring. Go to the page with me on it!"

Will giggled and turned the page.

Mike continued, "Aha! See, I'm the best one in here."

Will chuckled, "Nu-uh. The ankylosaurus is the best."

"What?" Mike made the dinosaur say, "I'm going to eat you for that." The dino feasted on Will's fingers. "Om-nom-nom."

Will's laugh was light and made Mike think of bubbles. He liked making Will laugh.

Mike asked, "Do you really like ankylosaurus the best?"

"Yeah. They're like a dinosaur with super powers, like they have a big giant hammer on their tail. All T-Rexes have sharp teeth and



claws and lots of dinosaurs have those.”

Mike thought about that for a moment. “Do you have an ankylosaurus at home?”

“Yeah!”

“Could you bring it in tomorrow, so we could play?”

Will nodded, excited at the idea of being with Mike again tomorrow.

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At the end of the day, they all went outside to play, as their parents came to pick them up. Mike had bent over next to Will and watched him draw with chalk. He was really good at it.

They heard Will’s name called and they looked up. Joyce Byers stood outside the fence waving to Will. He was so happy and relieved to see his mom. He waved back excitedly and ran to her, catching her in the biggest hug.

Mike stood, watching. Will hadn’t even said goodbye. Mike blinked hard and looked down but suddenly felt two arms holding him tight. Mike hugged Will back as tight as he could and tried to lift him up.

Will laughed, “I’ll bring the dinosaurs tomorrow.”

Mike said excitedly, “I’ll bring all my dinosaur books!”

“Okay!” Will let go of Mike and waved to him, “See you tomorrow!” He turned back and ran to his mom. His mom waved at Mike, with a big smile, then took Will’s hand and walked him to the front entrance where the other students were. He watched them pick up another boy and walk to their car. Mike decided to ask Will about his brother tomorrow.

Mike picked up the chalk and added to Will’s drawing of an ankylosaurus. Mike did his best to make a T-Rex. He stood back, pretty proud. But then he realized something. It looked like the T-Rex wanted to eat the other. One was a plant-eater and the other was a meat-eater. Mike was stumped about how to show that they were

friends. He got an idea and finished the drawing, putting a heart in between them.

He heard his name and saw both Nancy and his Mommy waiting. He ran to his mom, who had squatted down to catch him. He held her tight, nuzzling into her arms. He had missed her so much. Mike let go and she stood up, taking his hand.

He couldn't wait to tell her about his day.